# HIS MAJESTIES Conceſſions

*To the*

BILL of ABOLITION

OF

*Arch-Biſhops* and *Biſhops*, &c.

*STATED*

and

*CONSIDERED.*

Printed in the yeare 1648.

HIS

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STATED

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SIR,

*THe law of friendſhip obligeth me to anſwer your deſire, by affording to you my ſenſe touching his Majeſty his Conceſſions towards the removal of Epiſcopal Government, or the Bil of Abolition.*

## His Majeſties Conceſſions to the Bill of Abolition of Arch-Biſhops, Biſhops, &c. *Stated & Conſidered.*

HIs Majeſty hath fully and expreſſely conſented to the Bill of Abolition and removall of the whole Hierarchy contained in the Bill, excepting that part thereof which relates to Biſhops; Whoſe juriſdictive power (as he cals it) he hath alſo abrogated finally and for ever, except the two Houſes ſhall otherwiſe determine, and hath reſerved to them ſome power in Ordination only, wherein he would have them to be (as we uſe to ſay,) of the *Quorum*, by the uſe or power of a negative voice in that action, but withall, doth actually ſuſpend them from

the exercise of all manner of power of Ordination for three years; during which time he hath oblig'd himselfe to make no other, no more Bishops, but refers himself to further debate and consultation of Divines, what shall obtaine in the Church of *England* after the expiration of that terme, according as himselfe and the two Houses shall determine upon their advice; which may probably upon his Majesties information more throughly in the point, issue to a total abolition of both the name and all power of Bishops. But if then his Majesty and the Houses shall not agree, the Bishop shall have power of Ordination with the councel and consent of the Presbyters, or the major part of them conjoyned or cooperating with him. Which Presbyters are not to be nominated or appointed by his Majesty alone, much lesse arbitrarily associated by the Bishop himselfe, but appointed and authorised by his Majesty and the two Houses, and not otherwise.

This being the cleare state (as farre as I understand) of his Majesty his Concession, except I be mistaken in the length of that word *cooperate*, which is not his Majesties expression, I shall offer to you these two considerations upon it.

*Consid.* 1.

First, whether the Bishops of *England*, (and to whom only the bill extends) be not hereby in effect abolished, not only as to their *posse*, but also as to their *esse*; for,

1. There remaines no visible way of making any Bishop hereafter, because the Deanes and Chapters, who were by the lawes and usage of this Kingdome to elect the Bishop recommended to them by the Kings *conge de liere*, are utterly taken away, so as there can be no proceeding to an Ordination of them, and if the book or forme of consecration be together with the Book of Common Prayer also abolisht, I cannot see but that the Bishops are abolisht also, and cannot be made without some new way of constitution which rests in the power of the Parliament.

2. The

2. The Bishops that now are, cannot after three years ordaine, except the Houses agree to appoint Presbyters to joyne with them in that action, which if the Houses shall not do, the Bishops power is still under suspension; and if the Presbyterial Government and Ordination were but granted indefinitely, as it is for three years, I do not see but it would rest in the power of the Houses whether the Bishop should ever ordaine or no, and so in effect be vacated, being limited to a concurrence of Presbyters which are not found.

3. His Majesty in this Concession seems to me, (which I speak under his Majesties favour) to have gone quite beside his owne level; for in his Papers given to the Divines at *Newport*, He cuts out the Episcopall office by the patterne of the Apostles, and of *Timothy* and *Titus*, whose Episcopall office (as he cals it,) did not consist only in a concurrence with a major part of Presbyters in Ordination, or a negative voyce to such a major part; nor do the Scriptures by his Majesty alledged, prove them to have been Bishops in this sense and latitude onely, but the Primitive Bishops of the second, and haply some of the first Century after Christ, were rather of this model, being of the *Quorum* in Ordination Which Primitive Bishops, (as the Divines say in their Answer) might possibly be, and yet the Bishops of *England* be abolisht, and so it appears that the Bishops in the Bill presented to his Majesty, are by this Concession of his quite altered and cast in a new mould; which if his Majesty would please to make as a new tendry to his Houses of Parliament, and expressely remove the old, the rub would be in a manner quite taken out of the way, which remains in the opinion of many, because his Majesty doth under the name of the present Bishop capitulate before-hand for a new Episcopacy, which present Bishop, if you shall not concurre with me in opinion that he is in effect abolisht by his Majesties Concession, yet certainly he is reduced to so small a haire as cannot be divided any more; for if the King should go but one step further, and take off that negative voice, which this Bishop that is offered

is to have in Ordination, he would be then no more then one Presbyter, as he is very little more by this Conceſſion, in the *affirmative part* of *acting*, though he be more in the *negative part* of *not acting*, which negative voyce of the Biſhop would very ſeldome be uſed, or if it were, all reaſon is, that the expectant or candidate of the miniſtry, ſhould have ſome relief of his *gravamen*, by appeale to the Provinciall meetings, or ſome other Aſſembly, which ſhould have power to determine the caſe; and then I cannot ſe but that even this negative voice is rendred in effect nothing, and ſo the Biſhop in effect aboliſhed; and if I was in a capacity to ſupplicate his Majeſty, I ſhould beſeech him to conſider that there is ſome difference between *gravamen ſpiritus* and *ligamen conſcientiæ*. For the affection he bears to that Government of Epiſcopacy, and the long uſage of it in the Church, may be *heavy on his ſpirit*, and make the Abolition *unpleaſing*, which yet do not binde the conſcience, or make the doing it unlawfull to him.

*Conſid.* 2.

Secondly, it may be conſidered if the Biſhop be not in effect aboliſht in regard of his *being*,

1. Whether it be any inconvenience, to ſet up in every County or Province a *Presbytery* for *Ordination*, (the juriſdictive part to go as is already eſtabliſht in Elderſhips, Claſſes and Synods) of the graveſt and moſt judicious Miniſters, both to give *reputation* to the Ordination, and to *prevent* the miſadminiſtration thereof in the Claſſes, moſt of which in *England* may haply not conſiſt of a competent number of men ſo fit to exerciſe it; for I am of opinion, that Ordination by Presbyters is good and lawfull, and that one of the *Quorum* concurring with them in Ordination, renders not the ſame evill or unlawfull; for if it did ſo, I ſee not how the *Presbyters* now in being, can well juſtify their *owne*.

2. This way propounded by his Majeſty might happily reduce all the Divines of *England* into a liking or acceptance of the Government, and ſo take off that *odium* or prejudice which it lies under with them and others.

3. The

3. The way of Ordination by Presbyters in every Province or County selected by Parliament *prima vice*, might prevent a great deale of influence which the now sequestred Divines being restored to a capacity of Pastoral charges, will have in the several Classes where they shall be seated.

4. That the Presbyterians ought to take heed that the cause of the continuance of the Warre and all the miseries of it be not laid at their doore, and that for oppoſing a thing in it selfe lawful, but not at present to be gotten *quite off*, by reason of the Kings present unsatisfaction, and his desire of time and meanes of better information.

5. That such Presbyterians as cannot finde a *Jus Divinum* for Ruling Elders acting in Ordination, do judge it as great a disconformity to allow the Ruling Elder a power of co-operation and authority in ordaining Ministers, as to allow one to be of the *Quorum*, who is thereby no more then a *Presbyter*, nor hath the Keyes any more in his hand for that, then a *Moderatour* for the present time may have, for orders sake.

6 That the Covenant binding to extirpate Bishops, if it be understood in *sensu diviso* in that Article, and not (as many conceive) in *sensu composito* onely, doth not oblige us to breake the peace of all, if every thing be not to be had at first; and if the great and ancient Tree be to be felled downe by agreement, shall the parties fight with one another, because the one will fell it downe chip by chip, the other will teare it up at once by the rootes? And therefore I humbly pray the honourable Members of Parliament, the warned Presbyterians, and (as they are called) Independents, to consider of this *Punctillio*, as it is laid in the ballance against the losse of all his Majesty his other Concessions, and the fruits and consequences of new distractions and sadder times; for (I speake onely in case that the King can be got no further) it ought to be well weighed whether this negative Vote in *Ordination*, be such a thing as may justly imbitter all our peace besides. And if any should say that out of this old root the old Episcopacy will grow againe: I do not conceive that it is possible, being;

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ing hoop'd about by the iron hoope of Laws: for the Primitive Episcopacy grew so fast, because the *Pagan* Princes looked not after that Government, which was but exercised over such voluntaries as put their necks under it, and Christian Princes thought they should allow it as much as it had under Heathens But as for the resurrection of it after it's dead, it cannot be, but by Parliament, and against an Act of Parliament, there is no fortification to be made; In fine, if I cannot prevaile with you to accept lesse then you aske, I humbly beseech the King to grant more then he yet offers, for the common peace sake, which is to be purchased at any rate next the price of truth, and even some truths are to be abated, or forborne to be exercised for the present, for the common and publike peace. *Vale.*

*November* 8.

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